Careers in Science Policy

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Careers in Science Policy

1 My background

2 Introduction to Science Policy

3 Working in Science Policy

4 Pursuing a Science Policy career

5 Questions
My career so far…

Biomedical Sciences BSc Hons.

Market Access
  Health Economic & Outcomes Research
  Consulting

Medicine, Health & Public Policy MSc.

Science Policy Officer
  Royal Society of Biology
  Biochemical Society

Senior Public Affairs and Policy Officer
  Medical Research Council
What is Science Policy?

- **Policy addressing specific scientific issues**
  - Vaccination strategy
  - Common agricultural policy
  - Sugar tax
  - Biosecurity strategy
  - Patient data in research
  - Gene patenting

- **Scientific evidence to inform policy**
  - Communicating science and research to inform policy
  - Striving for evidence-based legislation

- **Policy affecting the science / research environment**
  - Higher education policy
  - Research funding
  - Immigration / visa policy
  - Publishing policy
  - Research culture
  - Infrastructure
  - Data use and sharing
Working in Science Policy

What you might be working on:

- Researching and writing reports
- Reading and scrutinising policy
- Developing policy briefings
- Responding to consultation & inquires
- Policy communication – blogs, articles, social media etc...

- Meeting parliamentarians & policy makers
- Attending meetings, conferences, workshops, events etc..
- Organising events – sometimes in parliament
- Stakeholder engagement
- Networking
Working in Science Policy

Communicating, informing, influencing
Working in Science Policy

Key skills required:

• Research skills & attention to detail
• Writing styles to fit the audience (formal & informal)
• Awareness of external environment
• Understanding of government / policymaking processes
• Ability to communicate complex science to lay audiences
• Data analysis
• Critical thinking
• Presentations, speaking, networking
• Interpersonal skills & stakeholder engagement
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Where might you work?

**Government / Parliament**
- Houses of parliament
- MP/Peer offices
- Select Committees
- Civil Service
- Special Advisers

**Science policy professional**
- Learned society/professional bodies
- Think tanks
- Charities
- Universities
- Business/industry

**As a scientist / researcher**
- Policy advisory committees
- Chief Scientific Advisers
- Professional membership bodies
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- Internships
- Graduation Schemes
- Policy newsletters/publications
- Policy events opportunities
Pursuing a career in Science Policy

Is it for you?

Pros

• Can be academic / research based
• Keep up-to-date on science
• Dynamic environment – new policies all the time
• Opportunity to meet and work with people from across sectors
• Meetings, conferences, events
• Always learning
• Feel like you are making a difference

Cons:

• Policy documents can sometimes be quite dry
• Mostly office-based
• Sometimes have afterwork events
• Working on areas you are unfamiliar with (outside comfort zone)
• Can be high pressure with short deadlines
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Career progression

• Starting salary
  £25 – £28,000

• Senior positions
  £30 - £37,000

• Policy managers
  £35 - £45,000

• Heads of policy
  £45,000 upwards
A career in Science Policy

How to find out more:

• Sign up to Policy Newsletters

• Read policy briefings (POST notes and Campaign for Science and Engineering)

• Policy events (Voice of the Future, STEM for Britain)

• Westminster Forum (free/discounted student rates)

• Follow organisations you are interested in: Twitter, Linked In

• Policy blogs, magazines, journals (Research Fortnight, Nature News, BMJ)
Questions?
Thank you